

SUGGESTED INSERT TO COME BETWEEN 2ND AND 3RD PARAGRAPHS
OF MR. KNOCHE'S 15 OCTOBER DRAFT
(Present 3rd paragraph is dropped)

Your letter touches on two questions which have a direct bearing on this central issue of control -- indeed, their answers virtually define its location. The first is "who determines that a crisis exists or is imminent?" This is particularly important if such a determination is to automatically trigger significant changes in intelligence dissemination procedures or tasking authorities for national collection assets. Secondly, your letter speaks of the need for ensuring "immediate response to top-priority time urgent needs." This need certainly exists; but in a period of actual or imminent crisis, there are bound to be several different sets of intelligence consumers -- at both the national and the theater level -- with different needs which each, quite legitimately, will consider (to him, or them) as being top priority and time urgent. What is to be the mechanism for determining, in case of conflict, whose priority needs or time urgent requirements take precedence -- and where is the decision point for making such determinations to be located?

As you are well aware, under present arrangements, the US Government's highest policy forum is the National

Security Council which, in crisis situations, is supported by an NSC subcommittee: the Washington Special Action Group. The DCI, ~~by statute~~, is the NSC's principal foreign intelligence advisor and ~~by practice~~, the principal fount of substantive intelligence support to the WSAG. Unless and until presently applicable statutes, and procedures now endorsed by the NSC, are changed, any mechanisms for providing intelligence support to policy determination at the national level in crisis periods -- or any mechanisms affecting others' ability to discharge their statutory responsibilities in this area -- should be framed in light of the mechanisms for policy determination and decision making which now exist.

As to the narrower issue of improving statellite responsiveness, I am more than willing to explore new ways to accomplish this, and welcome your suggestions, which certainly merit careful consideration. Our present procedures clearly need open-minded re-examination and are doubtless susceptible to considerable improvement. I am nonetheless convinced that the Community's responses in past crises have been quite timely, well considered and effectively helpful to those who had to make decisions

at the national level. It, therefore, strikes me as unjust and unfair to categorize these responses as "routine committee action."

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E. H. Knoche/DRAFT
15 October 1975

The Honorable Albert C. Hall
Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Intelligence)
Department of Defense
3E282, The Pentagon

Dear Al:

I have your letter of 6 October concerning satellite responsiveness during crisis situations. Your interest in examining ways to improve community performance in this area is one we share.

There are a number of key points involved in this important subject. First and foremost, in my judgment, is the need to insure that policy-making levels of the NSC and the WSAG have a clear understanding of the machinery that can be employed to integrate policy concerns, intelligence performance and operational aspects in dealing with crises. Policy control of the process is essential.

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I am more than willing to explore new ways to accomplish this, ~~your suggestions~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ Your suggestions, which certainly merit suggestion that special procedures should supplant "routine committee careful consideration. Our present action" is certainly worth considering but I am convinced that the community's actions in the past have been reasonably timely, well considered and far from routine.

A community approach to the problem is in the final analysis necessary and useful and need not be cumbersome or slow.

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• Future arrangements for controlling collection will have to provide for speedy weighing of priorities from various governmental entities and anything those entities can do to define and categorize priorities as a part of this process will be welcome.

Accordingly, I would commend DoD's focusing of its requirements within the NMCC as a good way to define DoD's priorities.

Final decisions on the tasking of collection systems are, as you know, subject to various constraints, chief of which are the limitations of the capacities of the system and the need to respond to policy direction while making trade-offs between intelligence and operational priorities. 25X

I am concerned that policy-makers and intelligence users do not well understand the community's current and projected arrangements to accomplish this, and I have asked the Intelligence Community Staff to develop ways to increase the visibility of those arrangements. As we widen understanding, we will identify weaknesses and improve where improvement is required.

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I also intend to seek an early meeting of WSAG and to press for development of government-wide plans to insure NSC-level orchestration of crisis management arrangements.

In the meantime, as stated, I have no problem with your assigning to NMCC the responsibility for determining DoD requirements and priorities.

Sincerely,

W. E. Colby

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